

We're excited you're thinking about starting a program  
to recover food and help your community.



# INSPIRE OTHERS

People



# Introduction

Food Forward started as a grassroots, volunteer-led effort in the community. Since 2009, we have grown into a 501(c)(3) organization powered by staff and thousands of unique volunteers annually. Below are ways to think about the roles and people you may need to start a gleaning project in your community.

## Questions to consider

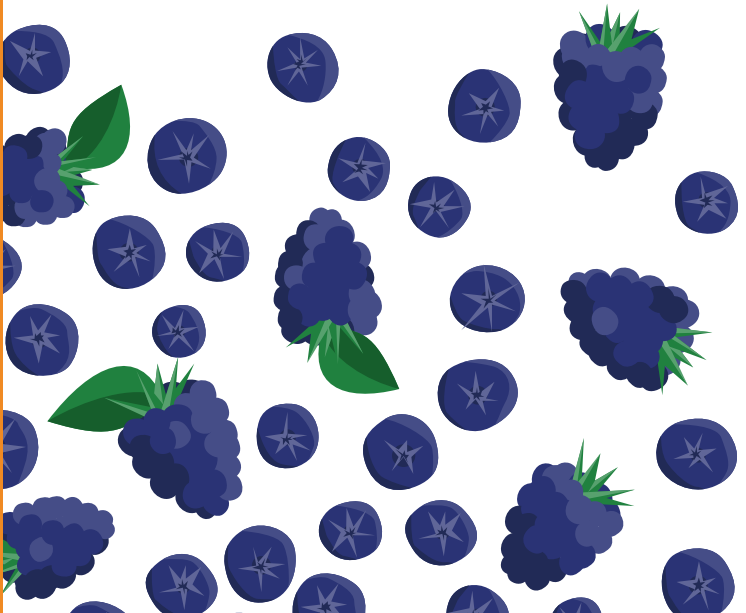
- What kinds of people or organizations involved in food recovery or food insecurity exist in your community?
- How many people will be involved? How many people would you like to have involved?
- How much time can you and the rest of your team members contribute to this project?
- Do you want to start an official nonprofit or other organization, or is this an unofficial community project?
- Do you plan to raise money for your group to operate, including staff salaries should you choose to form an official nonprofit?
- What kind of skill sets do you and any other team members have?
- Who is in your personal network that would support you or connect you with others?
- How much do people in your community already know about the issue of food waste, food insecurity, and food recovery?  
If folks are unfamiliar with the issues, starting with or including educational materials in your work may be helpful.

## Roles to fill

Below are roles that we believe are necessary for a successful food recovery project. These roles can be filled by individual people, or multiple roles can be filled by the same person. There may be natural places for overlap among these roles.

Roles needed in a smaller, mostly volunteer-led group:

- Someone to recruit and manage volunteers
- Someone to manage equipment and transportation
- Someone to manage communications and community outreach
- Someone to manage relationships (with hunger relief agencies, produce donors, etc.)
- Someone to manage the budget and fundraising
- Someone to organize, delegate, and see the big picture
- Someone to source food to be recovered

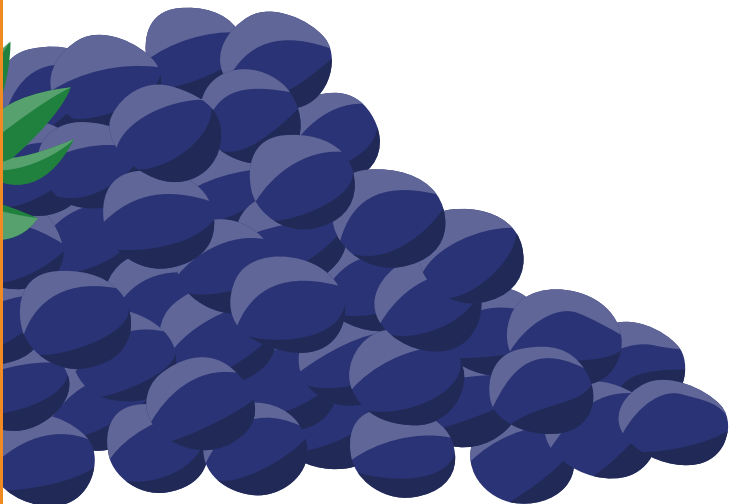


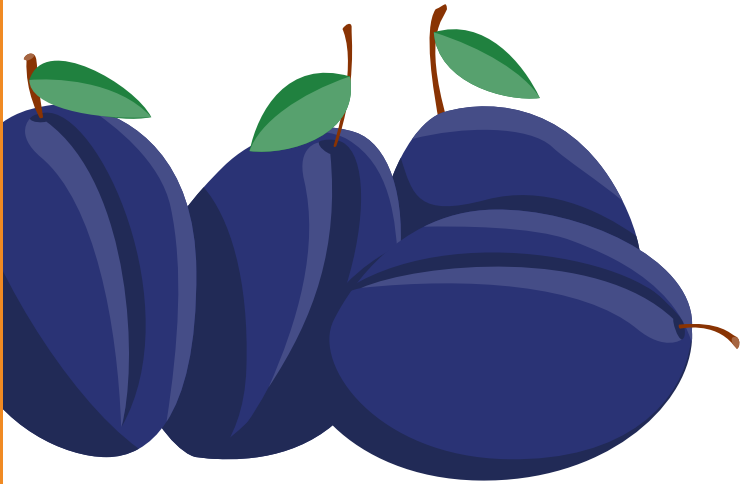
# Volunteer recruitment and management

If you're interested in learning more, view Food Forward's presentation on [Volunteer Recruitment, Retention, and Rewards](#).

- How do we find and recruit volunteers?
  - Post opportunities on volunteer platforms (United Way, Volunteer Match, local volunteer websites, volunteer apps, AARP, social media, NextDoor, neighborhood groups, and more).
  - Connect with larger groups of potential volunteers through colleges/universities, meetup sites, high schools, businesses with corporate volunteer programs, neighborhood councils, faith-based organizations, etc.  
Ask if you can post on a bulletin board or give a presentation.
  - You can also reach out to local media. This approach may be especially useful once you are somewhat established.
- How do we get volunteers to come back?
  - Create a safe, welcoming, and fun environment for volunteers.
    - Make expectations and safety rules clear at the start of the event, and ensure that volunteers are properly trained.
    - Encourage volunteers to get to know one another, but don't force it.

- Demonstrate the impact of what volunteers contributed. Talk about the issue and significance of their work at the event. Send a follow-up message after the event with relevant information, such as the pounds of food recovered and where it was donated.
- Make signing up for volunteer events easy, and have some consistency with the schedule of events. For example, having an event on the first Saturday of the month makes it easier for people to plan, rather than choosing a random date each month.
- Show your appreciation for volunteers! This can take many forms. You could bring snacks to the event, organize a happy hour afterward, provide perks for returning volunteers, or post on social media to recognize a “Volunteer of the Month.” Get creative, and think about how to let volunteers know they are appreciated and build community among them.





## Food Forward's departments

- Founder & Executive Director
- Operations, which includes staff who handle our facilities
- Development, which includes staff who handle grants, events and partnerships, data about food recovered and people served, and design of communication materials
- Communications
- Technology
- Volunteer Engagement, which includes staff who handle volunteer recruitment and engagement
- Human Resources & Finance
- Programs, which includes our three produce recovery programs, each with its own staff
- Agency Relations, which includes staff who handle onboarding and working with our hunger relief agencies

## Tips

- Create accurate descriptions of volunteer events. If folks will get dirty, lift heavy boxes, or be outside the whole time, let them know.
- Send timely communications and reminders. Let people know they're confirmed for an event, and send a reminder a day or two before with all the information they'll need.
- Add a few more volunteer spots than you think you'll need because people cancel.
- Assess liability issues; a volunteer waiver and liability insurance are recommended.
- Create a system, even if it's only a spreadsheet, to keep track of volunteers and their contact information.
- Ask for feedback. For example, add a short survey (you can use Google Forms, Responster, or many other platforms) into your follow-up message so volunteers can give feedback anonymously and you can pinpoint areas for improvement.
- Don't be afraid to ask volunteers to bring basic equipment they have (such as gloves or a bucket), as well as what they'll want to have at the event (such as water and sunglasses).
- If you're starting from scratch, it's best to begin in one neighborhood and build your community of volunteers, produce donors, and supporters before you branch out to the broader community.

For more booklets visit  
[foodforward.org](http://foodforward.org)